

Town of Arlington
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Minutes of 3/21/2006, 7:15 PM, Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor Conference Room
Submitted by Scott Smith

Members present: Joe Cahill, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jeff Maxtutis, Lt. Jim McHugh, Chuck Pappas, John Sanchez, Scott Smith, Ed Starr, Laura Wiener

Associates: Howard Muisse

1. Administration

The minutes of 2/21/06 were approved unanimously. Ed Starr reviewed the agenda packet. There was general agreement that when a recommendation was to be implemented, a sketch for DPW would be useful. Laura Wiener offered to provide the appropriate line maps (from the Town GIS system) to TAC working groups.

2. Downing Square

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported on the meeting she had with Ron Santosuosso, Lt. McHugh, Jeff Maxtutis and Ed Starr. The consensus from this meeting was that parallel parking on of Park Avenue approach would be preferable to angle parking:

- It will be possible to add one space behind the utility pole, and still maintain the required sight distance of 200 feet. This results in 5 legal spaces, the same as the number of legal spaces that exist now
- During his field visit to check sight distances, Jeff noted that (a) the owner of one of the stores in the area expressed a preference for parallel parking and (b) there were a number of near misses with people backing out of the current unofficial diagonal parking.
- Currently, people can park in these spaces all day. If more spaces need to be made available for business customers, a time limit can be placed on parking. There are privately-owned spaces in the area available for all-day parking.

The second major issue was that of making Westminster Avenue one-way westbound (away from Downing Square). This will simplify operations in the Downing Square intersection, and will discourage eastbound cut-through traffic on Westminster. Scott Smith suggested a short one-way segment near the Downing Square intersection, so that residents of the street coming from the west will still have direct access. There was general agreement with this idea.

Given the issues with the raised crosswalk, and its lack of popularity, it will be left out of the recommendations.

Since the temporary raised crosswalk has been removed, the 20mph speed limit sign on Park Avenue is illegal, and will be removed.

3. Route 60 and Mass. Ave.

Jeff Maxtutis reported on a recent meeting with BSC. There was general agreement on making some inexpensive improvements:

- Countdown pedestrian signals

- Signal timing adjustments and controller upgrades
- Possibly, a left-turn lane extension

Ed Starr indicated that we are also investigating the timing at Pleasant and Irving.

4. Dickson and Wheeler

Chuck Pappas reported that this is normally a quiet intersection, but sees substantial traffic during school commute hours. Most traffic is on Wheeler. The following recommendations were unanimously voted:

- Stop signs facing Dickson
- Ask the residents of the southeast corner of the intersection to trim the brush that is obstructing visibility.

5. Stowecroft Road

Howard Muise presented findings and preliminary recommendations, in response to a request to close Stowecroft road to vehicular traffic during school commute hours. There was general agreement that given the absence of good alternative routes, closure of the street would not be appropriate. Since it appears that there will be an examination by Safe Travel to Schools of issues near Bishop school in the near future, we agreed to defer action until that examination is under way. We also agreed that the findings and preliminary recommendations would be excellent input to such an examination.

6. Safe Travel to Schools

Scott Smith reported that he had presented the draft traffic supervisor (crossing guard) criteria at the February 28th school committee meeting. School committee members were extremely interested, and had the following comments, among others:

- A request to consider other traffic control measures (e.g. stop signs) at high scoring locations
- Some of the school administrations are not providing much guidance on student travel
- A request to include visibility as a factor.

He presented a revised scoring scheme to indicate where traffic supervisors are most necessary.

Scott Smith and Lt. McHugh reported on the work being done at Hardy School. This group, led by principal Gerald Carmody, includes TAC, DPW, Police and parent representation. Immediate actions included

- Education and enforcement of the no-parking regulation in the drop off zone on Chandler Street
- For the route to school that comes from the north side of Mass Ave (Windsor Street area), cross Mass Ave. at the signal at Lake Street rather than the uncontrolled crosswalk at Marathon Street

7. Thermoplastic Crosswalk List for 2006

Howard Muise presented the thermoplastic crosswalk list. After some discussion, we agreed on the following crosswalks:

- Redo the original seven on Mass Ave, to meet the current width standard: Marathon, Orvis, Wyman, Library Way, Academy, Bartlett, Coleman

- Water Street at Minuteman Bikeway
- Park Avenue at Oakland
- Mass. Ave at Sunrise Assisted Living
- Quincy at Gray Street
- River at Cornell

We agreed to omit the following locations from the list:

- Mill Street and Mill Brook Drive. DPW is considering a treatment that looks like brick, but is easier to walk on. This crosswalk will be done in paint.
- Broadway at Everett. Given the proximity of a signal-controlled crossing at North Union, and the absence of a sidewalk on the east side of Everett Street (Thompson School), Lt. McHugh suggested that a crosswalk here might not be desirable. (The existing painted crosswalk was obliterated when Broadway was repaved.)

8. TIP Candidates

Ed Starr reviewed the list of candidates for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

9. Lockeland / Mass. Ave.

Lt. McHugh noted that the no-parking sign is up, and that we expect the loops to be fixed in mid-April.

10. Mass Ave. Corridor

Scott Smith reported that he, John Sanchez, Kevin O'Brien and Ed Starr met earlier in the month, to discuss next steps on the project. The project is now in three sections: East (Route 16 to Pond Lane), Center (Pond Lane to Water Street), and Water Street to Grove Street. We will be pursuing design work on the East and Center sections.

11. Dallin School

Jeff Maxtutis reported that the acquisition of George Street did not appear in the Town Meeting Warrant, apparently due to an oversight. He asked DPW to place a priority on restoring the crosswalks in the area, and reported that operations at the school seemed to be working well.

12. East Arlington parking

Scott Smith reported that nothing has happened in the past month.

13. Town Departments

Lt. McHugh reported that the Police department has received a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Bureau for two weeks of traffic enforcement.

John Sanchez reported that Summer Street construction will restart shortly. Ron Santosuosso is working on the design of Forest Street and Park Avenue extension.

14. Other issues

We reviewed current street identification signage at Dow/Appleton/Valentine and concluded that some sign relocations may be helpful. No official action will be required.

There was general agreement that a mirror at Court Street and Water Street will not be helpful. (People may not know how to use it, and might thus have a false sense of security.)

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Handouts:

Agenda packet with agenda, working groups, project rotation, Board of Selectmen requests, recommended follow-up steps with DPW, outstanding voted actions, TIP candidates - from Ed Starr

February 2006 minutes – from Scott Smith

Dickson/Wheeler report and recommendations – from Chuck Pappas

Stowecroft Road recommendations – from Howard Muise

Revised formula for determining the need for traffic supervisors - from Scott Smith

Thermoplastic crosswalk list – from Howard Muise